

P O E M

In Praise of the

HORN-BOOK:

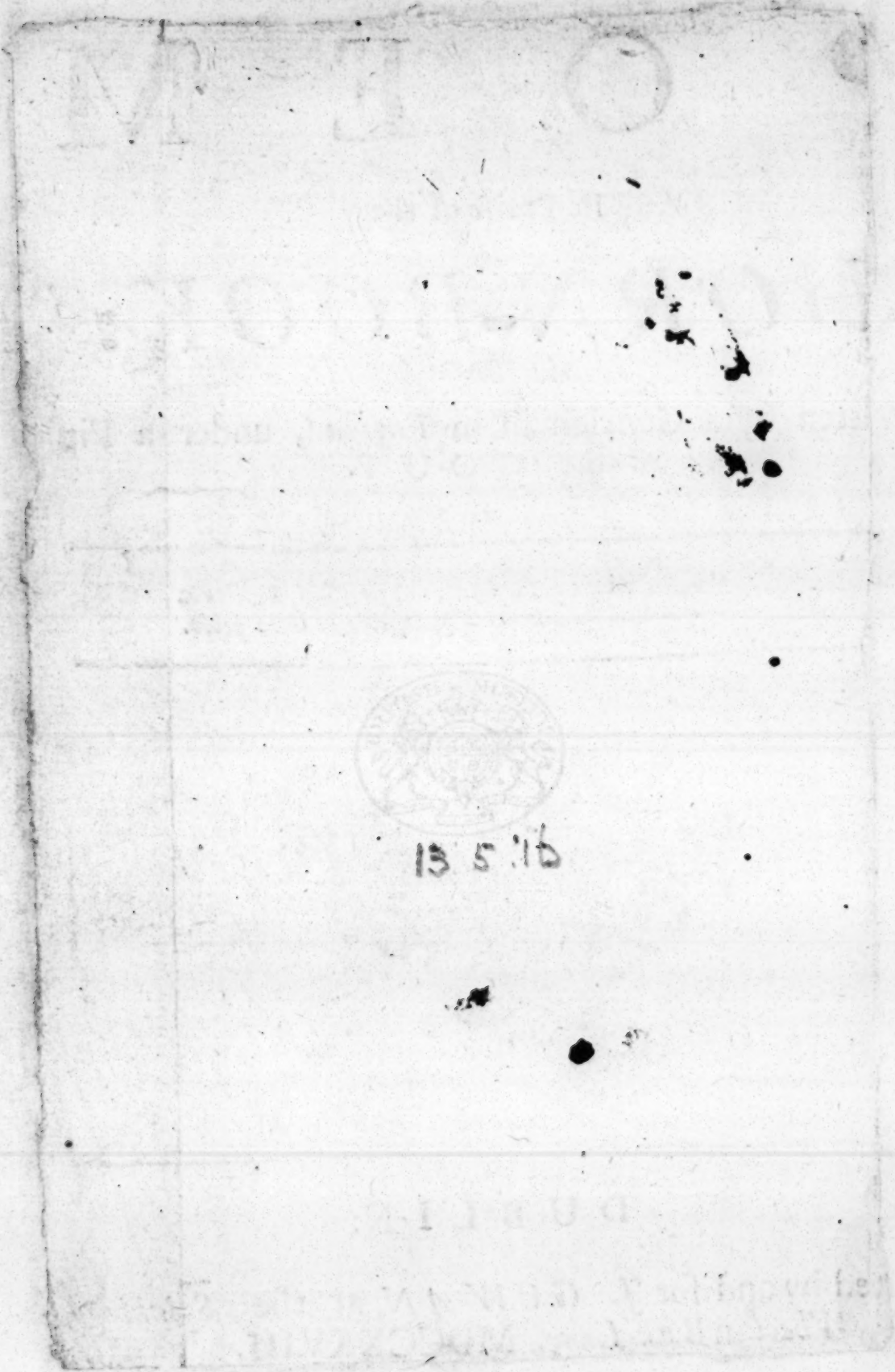
Written by a Gentleman in England, under a Fit
K of the, G O U T.

*Magni magna Patrant, nos non nisi Ludicra.
Podagra hac Otia fecit.*



D U B L I N:

Printed by and for J. GOWAN, at the Spinning-
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A

P O E M

n Praise of the HORN-BOOK.

HA I L ancient Book, most venerable Code,
Learning's first Cradle and its last Abode!
The Huge unnumber'd Volumes which we see,
By lazy Plagiaries are stol'n from thee;
Yet future Times to thy sufficient Store
Shall ne'er presume to add one Letter more.

T H E E wilt sing in comely Wainscot bound,
And Golden Verge enclosing thee around;
The faithful Horn before, from Age to Age,
Reserving thy invaluable Page;

Behind

Behind *thy Patron Saint* in Armour shines,
With *Sword and Lance*, to guard *thy sacred Lines* :
Beneath his *Courser's Feet* the *Dragon* lies
Transfix'd ; his *Blood thy scarlet Cover* dies ;
Th' instructive Handle's at the Bottom fix'd,
Least wrangling *Critics* should pervert the *Text*.

Or if to *Ginger Bread*, thou shalt descend,
And *Liquorish Learning* to *thy Babes* extend ;
Or *Sugar'd plane*, o'er spread with *beaten Gold*,
Does the sweet *Treasure of thy Letters* hold ;
Thou still shalt be my *Song* ; — *Apollo's Choir*
I scorn t' invoke, *Cadmus*, my *Verse* inspire.
'Twas *Cadmus*, who the first *Materials* brought
Of all the *Learning*, which *has* since been taught,
Soon made compleat ; for *Mortals* ne'er shall know
More than contain'd of old the *Christ-cross Row* ;
What *Masters* dictate, or what *Doctors* preach,
Wise *Matrons* hence, ev'n to our *Children* teach.
But as the *Name* of ev'ry *Plant* and *Flow'r*,
(So common that each *Peasant* knows its *Pow'r*)
Physicians in mysterious *Cant* express ;

T' amu

T'amuse their Patient and enhance their Fees.
So from the Letters of our native Tongue,
Put in *Greek* Scrauls, a Mystr'y too is sprung,
Schools are erected, *puzzling Grammars* made
And artful Men strike out a gainful Trade;
Strange Characters adorn the learned Gate,
And heedless Youth, catch at the shining Bait:
The pregnant Boys the noisy Charms declare,
And **Taus*, and †*Delta's* make their Mothers stare,
Th' uncommon Sounds amaze the vulgar Ear,
And what's uncommon never costs too dear.
Yet in all Tongues the *Horn-Book* is the same
Taught by the *Grecian Master*, or the *English Dame*.

But how shall I *thy endless Virtues* tell,
In which *thou* dost all other Books excell?
No *greasy Thumbs*, *thy spotless Leaf* can soil,
Nor *crooked Dogs Ears* *thy smooth Corners* spoil;
In idle Pages no *Errata* stand,
To tell the Blunders of the *P R I N T E R's Hand*
No *fulsom Dedication* here is writ,

**Tau* the Greek T, †*Delta* the Greek D.

Nor flatt'ring Verse to praise the Author's Wit:
The *Margin* with no tedious Notes is vex't,
Nor *various Readings* to confound the *Text*:
All Parties in *thy lit'ral* Sense agree,
Thou perfect Center of Concordancy!
Search we the Records of an ancient Date,
Or read what Modern Histories relate,
They all proclaim, what Wonders have been done,
By the *plain Letters* taken as they run.
Too high the Floods of Passion us'd to roul,
And rend the **Roman Youth's* impatient Soul,
His hasty Anger furnish'd Scenes of Blood,
And frequent Deaths of worthy Men ensu'd:
In vain were all the weaker Methods try'd,
None could suffice to Stem the furious Tyde,
Thy sacred Line he did but once repeat;
And laid the Storm, and cool'd the raging Heat.

* These Lines ingeniously describe the Advice given to *Agustus* by *Athenodorus* the Stoick Philosopher, who desired the Emperor neither to say nor do any Thing, but to take Time, till he had first said over the *Alphabet* or Letters of the *Horn-Book*; The strict observance of this Rule would be the Means to make his Passion fall and prevent any rash Words or passionate Actions.

Thy Heavenly Notes like Angels musick cheer
Departing Souls, and sooth the dying Ear.
An Aged Peasant, on his latest Bed,
Wish'd for a Friend some godly Book to read.
The pious Grandson, *thy* known *Handle* takes,
And (Eyes lift up,) this fav'ry Lecture makes.
Great A, he gravely roar'd, th' important Sound
The empty Walls and hollow Roof rebound:
Th' expiring Ancient rear'd his drooping Head,
And thank'd his Stars that *Hodge* had learn'd to read
Great B, the Yonker bawls: O heavenly Breath!
What Ghostly Comforts in the Hour of Death!
What Hopes I feel! *Great C*, pronounc'd the Boy;
The Grandfire dyes with Ecstasy of Joy.

Yet in some Lands such Ignorance abounds
Whole Parishes scarce know *thy* useful Sounds;
Of *Essex* Hundreds Fame gives this Report,
But Fame I ween says many Things in Sport.
Scarce lives the Man, to whom *thou*'rt quite unknown,
Tho' few th' Extent of *thy* vast Empire own.

Wha

What ever Wonders, Magick Spells can do
 In Earth, in Air, in Sea, in shades below;
 What Words profound and dark wise *Mah'met* spoke
 When his old *Cow* an Angel's Figure took;
 What strong Enchantments Sage *Canidia* knew,
 Or *Horace* sung, fierce Monsters to subdue,
 O mighty BOOK, are all contain'd in you.
 All humane Arts, and ev'ry Science meet,
 Within the Limits of *thy* single Sheet,
 From thy vast Root, all Learning's Branches grow,
 And all her Streams from *thy* deep Fountain flow.
 And lo! while thus *thy* Wonders I indite,
 Inspir'd I feel the Power of which I write;
 The gentler *Goat* his former Rage forgets,
 Less frequent now and less severe the Fits,
 Loose grow the Chains, which bound my useless Feet:
 Stiffness and Pain from ev'ry Joynt retreat;
 Surprizing Strength comes ev'ry Moment on,
I stand, I step, I walk, and now I run.
 Here let me cease, my hobling Numbers stop,
 And at *thy* Handle, hang my Crutches up.

FINIS.

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